

# Beliefs, intentions, power : essays on dynamic decision problems

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# BELIEFS, INTENTIONS, POWER

## ESSAYS ON DYNAMIC DECISION PROBLEMS

BY ZSOMBOR Z. MÉDER

### PROPOSITIONS ACCOMPANYING THE DISSERTATION

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1. A full understanding of dynamic inconsistency requires an explicit distinction between intentions and beliefs.
2. It can be optimal to deceive oneself by willfully choosing to become naive.
3. The voluntary transfer of punishment power is a key mechanism for the constitution of social institutions.
4. Hierarchy is an essential aspect of human social organization. In a new group, hierarchy emerges spontaneously and rapidly.
5. Power – or influence – is the degree and cost at which a player can change other player's payoffs.
6. The emergence of power structure is a special instance of the distribution of labor. The task of coordinating, incentivizing, and monitoring of human beings, i.e., the use of power, is the most intricate human endeavour.
7. Humans have a unique ability to deal with new and extremely complex strategic situations. This ability coevolved with language and social structure.
8. It is often more prudent to let a group organize itself without external interference. Chosen leaders command more legitimacy and are often more able than assigned ones.
9. We have an array of metastrategies that enable us to handle all forms of strategic interactions. Few of these metastrategies have been explored yet.
10. The grand project and narrative of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is ensuring humanity's continued existence. Whether our existence is preferable – even from our own perspective! – is hardly a matter for debate. In order to open up fundamental thinking about our future, a frank discussion of the merits of our own species should take place.